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Housekeepers' Chat

Tuesday, January 7, 1930

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Buying Rugs and Carpets." Approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Floors and Floor Coverings."

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The other day, while I was collecting material on rugs and carpets, I ran across a story about Robert Herrick, the famous novelist. One morning, so the story goes, he appeared at a neighbor's door, and asked politely if he might see her new parlor carpet. The lady of the house, flattered that the news of her recent purchase had traveled across the street, asked him to come in,

For several minutes young Herrick gazed seriously at the carpet, then announced: "Well, it certainly doesn't make me sea-sick!!"

Today we seldom see carpets or rugs, with the violent designs of the mid-Victorian past. Do you remember the bright green rugs, with festoons of pink roses in the center? Many of us had one of them on the parlor floor.

In choosing floor coverings for the home, says an authority on the subject, there are a few simple rules to which we have become educated.

First, the color of the rug must be "tied" in to the major color harmony of the room, so that there will be no break in the decorative scheme;

Second, the darkest colors in the room belong on the floor, and the lightest on the ceiling, thus giving the feeling of weight or solidity underfoot;

Third, quiet colors should be placed in large areas, and the spots of brilliancy in smaller rooms;

Fourth, plain or self-color figured rugs can stand bright-hued draperies of riotous design, while more distinctly figured rugs, in various colors, require plain draperies.

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If you are in the market for a rug, whether it be a Brussels rug, a Wilton, a Velvet, an Axminster, or an Oriental rug, you will be interested in the bulletin on "Floors and Floor Coverings." This bulletin also goes into detail about the various kinds of linoleum.

Last week I went shopping with my Next-Door Neighbor. She converted a Christmas gift of cash into an Oriental rug. Do you know that Oriental rugs-- not only the antique, but the modern ones-- are the only hand-knotted rugs? They are made in Eastern countries, where labor is cheap. As a whole, they are the most beautiful and the most sought after of all floor coverings.



The value of a genuine Oriental rug depends on the design, the fastness of color, the compactness and evenness of the weave, the number of knots to the square inch, the materials used, and, in the case of the antique Oriental, on the condition. From our point of view, the value of an Oriental rug depends also on whether the rug harmonizes with the other furnishings in our homes. Oriental rugs reach their greatest beauty and value after they have lain on the floor for a long time, and have been polished by the wear of oriental sandals.

For Orientals, particularly, one should go to a reliable dealer, since many rugs are sold at high prices, as "antiques" when they are really modern rugs, skillfully bleached. Sometimes this bleaching is so skillfully done that even expert judges are deceived. But there are a few signs that most anybody can recognize. For instance, if cheap, crude dyes have been used, the darker colors generally run into the lighter, making a blurred design. If the rug has been very much bleached, the colors on the surface of the pile will be soft and dull, but if you separate the threads, and look closely at the colors at the base, you will find the colors clear and bright.

I learned something new about carpets, from the rug salesman. Carpets should be bound, stretched, and pressed before laying. The proverbial lining is paper-- a single paper for a high pile, double for a low pile-- but a newer felt lining, which comes in various thicknesses, is highly recommended.

And let me tell you a trade trick I learned, about laying stair carpets. A little extra fold is left on the last stair step, so that when the carpet on the "nose" of the step begins to wear, there is enough material to turn the carpet, making the spot at the nose fall into the joint, where it doesn't show.

Enough about carpets for today. If you want more information, please write for the bulletin, "Floors and Floor Coverings."

I'd like to get caught up on the questions this morning, so that we'll have time for another menu tomorrow, and two new recipes.

Here's a question from a friend who wants help in arranging her bed room, "to make it cozy looking." She has criss-cross ecru curtains on the two north windows. Her furniture is walnut. "Would rose and green be a good color scheme for this ~~north~~ north room?" she asks.

It is rather hard to give very helpful advice about the color scheme and arrangement of a bedroom without seeing it. In general, though, rooms with a north lighting only, look better with one of the warmer colors, such as rose, or soft yellow. Green is one of the so-called cooler colors, which looks better in a room flooded with sunlight. Some <sup>very</sup> state colleges have issued attractive bulletins on interior decoration. You might write to your state college, and also to your home demonstration agent, if there is one in your county. She will be able to look over your room, and give you some valuable suggestions, I'm sure.

The next query is from a homemaker who asks whether parlor linens, such as piano, table, and music cabinet scarfs, should be starched. Nowadays it is not customary to starch linens, for most people do not care for the stiff, starchy appearance. I'm sending you a copy of the bulletin which gives directions for laundering various kinds of fabrics.





Third question: "Please let me know, if you can, how to temper glassware. I have a set of green glass cups and saucers. Recently I broke one with hot coffee, and I'm afraid to use them now, until I find out how to temper them."

I referred this question to the Menu Specialist. She thinks that the ordinary household method of turning the glass or cup on its side, and rotating it in hot water, should be sufficient to temper the glass cups, before pouring in the hot coffee.

I am sorry that I have no detailed directions to send you. Why not write to one of the large glass manufacturers, for their booklets about glassware?

The next question -- well, this isn't a question at all, but a "helpful hint" for mothers of school children. Fresh raw vegetables, in the school lunch pail. Ever try that?

"If you haven't tried it," suggests this contributor, "just eat some crisp, raw vegetable with a sandwich, then try a sandwich without the vegetable, and notice the difference. The raw vegetable adds zest and interest, and requires chewing, which is often neglected when eating only soft foods."

"Some of the possibilities in raw vegetables for the lunch pail are strips of crisp, raw carrots, a few leaves or a section of cabbage, strips of winter radish, sections or slices of raw turnips, leaves of lettuce, and celery. I shall have to try out this idea on Billy. If he likes raw cabbage, turnips, celery, and so forth, as well at school as he does in the kitchen, when I'm preparing dinner, all will be well.

By the way, don't forget to put fruit in the winter lunch pail. Apples, bananas, (be sure they're ripe) grapes, oranges, and pears are available, even in the winter. And remember that ripe or canned tomatoes, on account of their richness of vitamins, are as valuable as oranges.

Tomorrow: "The Problem of Sweets for Children." Program will include menu and two recipes.

